

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

May 12, 2003
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Marshall, Deputy Mayor Degginger, and Councilmembers Creighton, Davidson, Lee, Mosher, and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Oral Communications

Mayor Marshall called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and announced that Council will recess to Executive Session following discussion of Study Session items.

- (a) Diane Pottinger expressed concern about a proposal to eliminate one police officer and shorten the DARE program from 17 weeks to 10 weeks in order to reduce program costs. She encouraged the City to maintain both officers currently working in the program.

Responding to Mayor Marshall, City Manager Steve Sarkozy said a number of issues have been discussed with the Bellevue School District in the context of the District's current budget process. He assured Council that no DARE program cuts are planned at this time.

- (b) Evelyn Zeller asked Council to support the reallocation of funds from the Forest Drive project to the NE 24th Street safety, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements project.
- (c) Norm Hansen, Vice President of the Bridle Trails Park Foundation, said he appreciates working with the City's Parks Department and Patrick Foran, Parks Director, to develop a plan to keep Bridle Trails State Park open. He encouraged Council to support the partnership between the State Park Commission and the Foundation.
- (d) Joseph Rosmann, Freeholder candidate and a member of the Bellevue Charter Now organization, said Charter Yes campaign signs have been vandalized and stolen in recent weeks. He noted a police report filed with regard to one incident. Mr. Rosmann urged all citizens to obey the laws and rules of the State and the City with respect to the display of political signage.

- (e) Cindy Ludwig asked Council to support the proposed reallocation of funds from the Forest Drive project to the NE 24th Street sidewalk project. She expressed appreciation for a bike path recently completed by the State and the City's Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) project in the area. Ms. Ludwig thanked Councilmember Noble for his support of the projects.

2. Study Session

Council agreed to take an agenda item out of order.

(c) Bridle Trails State Park

City Manager Steve Sarkozy explained that Bridle Trails State Park has been identified for possible closure due to State budget reductions. The Bridle Trails Park Foundation was recently formed by residents in an attempt to keep the park open. A partnership agreement between the State Parks Commission and the Foundation has been drafted to allow the Foundation to donate funds toward the park's ongoing operation.

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran said the State Parks Commission is scheduled to take action on the agreement on May 15. He asked Councilmembers to consider the draft letter of support for the agreement in Council's desk packet.

Mr. Noble expressed support for the agreement, which will allow the park to continue to provide pedestrian and equestrian trail opportunities for citizens. Mr. Mosher concurred.

Mayor Marshall thanked residents for their work to create the Foundation. She noted Council consensus to proceed with sending the letter of support.

(a) Council New Initiatives

Dr. Davidson presented an idea to create a comprehensive planning forum of representatives from Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, Issaquah, Sammamish, and Newcastle. Mayor Marshall asked the City Manager to explore the suggestion with staff and report back to Council.

(b) Environmental Services Commission Appointments

Dr. Davidson, liaison to the Environmental Services Commission, reported that interviews of six applicants for Commission positions were held last week.

- ➡ Dr. Davidson moved to appoint Jim Roberts, Garrett Ferencz, and Jean Worthen to the Environmental Services Commission for four-year terms through May 31, 2007. Mr. Degginger seconded the motion.
- ➡ The motion to appoint Jim Roberts, Garrett Ferencz, and Jean Worthen to the Environmental Services Commission carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Marshall thanked all of the citizens who applied for the Commission openings.

- (d) Proposed reallocation of a projected balance of funds in CIP Plan No. PW-R-128, Forest Drive Improvements

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman said the purpose of this agenda item is to provide more detailed information on the proposed reallocation of a projected balance of funds from the Forest Drive Improvements Project (CIP Plan No. PW-R-128).

Eric Miller, Capital Programming Manager, reviewed the Transportation Commission's September 2002 funding recommendations for Capital Investment Program (CIP) projects. The NE 24th Street (Northup to 130th Avenue) project was funded for a pre-design analysis. A pre-design analysis project at 140th Avenue NE and NE 40th Street was not funded, however.

Mr. Miller said the Transportation Commission voted on April 24, 2003, to recommend the redistribution of a projected fund balance of \$2.35 million in the Forest Drive Improvements Project as follows:

- 140th Avenue NE Pathway \$1.00 million
- NE 24th Street (PW-W/B-69) \$1.35 million.

The Transportation Commission noted significant public support for both projects in the 2002 CIP update process.

Mr. Miller requested Council direction on the reallocation of CIP funds. Final design and construction for both projects could occur in 2004/2005. Interim pedestrian safety improvements are underway for the NE 24th Street project.

Mr. Noble said both projects are needed and wanted by the community. They provide safety improvements in areas with busy pedestrian traffic including school children.

Deputy Mayor Degginger noted strong support by residents for the 140th Avenue project. He is in favor of the reallocation of funds to the two identified projects. Mr. Mosher concurred.

Mayor Marshall noted Council support for the proposal and asked staff to present the item for approval on a future Consent Calendar. She thanked staff for providing additional details. Mayor Marshall thanked residents for their ongoing advocacy of these projects.

- (e) Bellevue Transit Plan 2001-2007 Final Report

Mr. Sparrman introduced staff to provide an overview of the Capital and Policy Elements of the Bellevue Transit Plan. The first section of the plan, the Service Element, was adopted by Council in April 2001. The document is a local transit plan focusing on bus service in Bellevue. The plan includes recommendations for capital investments over time, but staff is not requesting Council direction on specific projects tonight. Staff would like Council direction and input on general concepts to be presented, however.

Bernard van de Kamp, Regional Project Manager, said staff have been working with Metro and Sound Transit to develop the local transit plan, which incorporates input from interviews with bus riders as well as other forms of public involvement.

Franz Loewenherz, Senior Transportation Planner, said the Service Element adopted in 2001 provided the necessary guidance and influence on Metro's September 2001 service change and development of Metro's Six-Year Transit Plan. The Capital and Policy Elements follow up on the Service Element by outlining the strategies the City can utilize to make transit operate more efficiently and effectively and to maximize existing service. Mr. Loewenherz shared comments by bus riders who rely on transit to get to school and work. He noted the City's role in supporting bus service through its land use, zoning, parking considerations, and overall urban design.

Mr. Loewenherz described public outreach efforts involved in developing the Bellevue Transit Plan. Focus group discussions were held with senior citizens, youth, students, and residents currently using transit services. A summary of the plan was provided in *It's Your City* and a survey was distributed through the Internet and the U.S. mail. A public hearing on the plan was hosted by the Transportation Commission. Public input highlighted the need for earlier and later transit operation, improved shelters and sidewalks, and more frequent and quicker service.

Mr. Loewenherz reviewed maps of current transit service on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at different times of the day. With the exception of peak weekday hours, most of Bellevue lacks 30-minute service intervals. Mr. Loewenherz discussed staff's focus on improving intra-Bellevue service, particularly between Downtown, Overlake, Crossroads, Eastgate, and Factoria. As a result of staff's work with Metro, peak hour bus frequency improved in the fall of 2001 compared to the previous year with the redeployment of 70,000 service hours. Staff anticipates 10-minute service frequency between Bellevue's major activity centers by the fall of 2007 based on Metro's Six-Year Plan. Mr. Loewenherz said the Council's work in regional forums resulted in an increase in the new service hour allocation from 20 percent to 40 percent for East King County in Metro's Six-Year Transit Plan.

Mr. Loewenherz described the Capital Element of the Bellevue Transit Plan, which addresses transit facilities and roadway segments/improvements. Improvements totaling \$330 million are underway within Bellevue to improve transit service including Bellevue Transit Center, Eastgate Park and Ride expansion, Overlake Transit Center, and the Access Downtown project. Nearly half of Bellevue's 30,000 daily trips begin or end in neighborhoods. The Capital Element of Bellevue's plan encompasses many types of improvements including non-motorized access, bus stop amenities, arterial improvements, pavement overlay, transit signal priority, and commuter parking. Evaluation criteria used in the consideration of improvements included location within the transit priority network, demographics, land use, employment, and elderly citizen density.

In terms of bus stop amenities, Mr. Loewenherz said 84 percent of Bellevue bus stops (700 locations) do not have shelters and many are not ADA accessible. Transit signal priority has been in place at two Bellevue locations (NE 8th Street and 148th, NE 8th Street and 156th) for approximately two weeks. A Metro study along Seattle's Rainier Avenue showed significant

benefit to transit with transit signal priority and minimal impact to traffic on adjacent side streets. Mr. Loewenherz described the need for bus layover locations, particularly in Downtown Bellevue, to ensure frequent service.

Mr. Loewenherz noted he has covered only some of the potential capital investments. The planning-level estimate for proposed capital improvements in the 2001-2007 Bellevue Transit Plan totals \$55.5 million. A majority of the investments represent citywide, multi-modal improvements, while transit-only improvements reflect \$15.5 million of the total. Funding alternatives include federal grants, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and local funding.

In closing, Mr. Loewenherz said the intent of the Policy Element is to document the City's transit-related initiatives and evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code.

Councilmember Lee praised staff's presentation and expressed support for the plan. He suggested vans as a more economically efficient option than buses for some routes. He encouraged the City to consider the privatization of local bus service.

Mr. Sparrman commented that the size of vehicles is not as critical in terms of operating expenses as factors such as headways. He recalled Council's interest in a local bus circulator service and explained that changes in state law would be required to allow Bellevue to contract with a transit operator other than Metro and Sound Transit. Mayor Marshall suggested the issue could be added to Council's state legislative agenda.

Mr. Mosher said he appreciates the work and analysis by City staff to influence Metro's planning and decisions, since Metro staff are not able to provide this level of analysis for Bellevue. He feels shorter bus intervals will increase bus ridership.

Responding to Mr. Creighton, Mr. Loewenherz said the Bellevue Transit Plan provides more details regarding planned service enhancements to Overlake Hospital. Mr. Creighton asked whether bus pullout lanes have been considered by Metro. Mr. Sparrman said Metro struggles to balance the issue of pullout lanes with the difficulty they create in re-entering traffic. Metro is more likely to provide pullout lanes on fast-moving arterials, however. Mr. Creighton said the bus stop at 148th Avenue and NE 8th Street consistently slows down traffic when buses are stopped. Mr. Sparrman said staff will continue to work on this issue with Metro.

Dr. Davidson expressed support for the transit plan as presented. However, he is concerned about circulation and layovers in Downtown Bellevue. He would like to see a ride-free zone downtown and extending to Overlake Hospital as well.

Mr. Sparrman said discussions about a ride-free zone are ongoing with Metro staff. Regarding layover zones, he acknowledged that Bellevue has less public right-of-way than most cities and the competition for parking, pedestrian amenities, travel lanes, and bus lanes is fairly intense. Staff will continue to work on this issue as well.

Mr. Lee noted Council support for a downtown circulator system and suggested it should be the highest priority item.

Mayor Marshall suggested that buses serving Overlake Hospital should be timed to coincide with work shifts. She suggested including information about transit service improvements in *It's Your City*.

Mayor Marshall thanked staff for the presentation. She noted Councilmembers are willing to testify before Metro regarding the need for a ride-free zone in Bellevue.

3. Executive Session

At 7:20 p.m., Mayor Marshall announced recess to Executive Session to discuss one item of property disposition, one item of labor negotiations, and one item of potential litigation.

At 9:45 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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